fixed on the basis of 'outstandings' which decrease as a result of improved recoveries and write-off of loans. Further, the reserve requirements of banks have progressively been reduced during the recent years leading to a substantial increase in the volume of lendable resources. As a result, overall Bank Credit and credit to agriculture has also expanded. But, despite an increase in their lendings to agriculture, the banks have not been able to maintain the stipulated share of 18% of their NBC as finance to agriculture.

Notwithstanding this, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has advised scheduled commercial banks to make all efforts to achieve the stipulated target/sub-target for lending to priority sector/agriculture. Banks which have not reached the agricultural lending sub-target of 18% of net bank credit are required to make contributions to the Rural Infrastructural Development Fund (RIDF) maintained by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) which is used to provide funds to the State Government for investment in rural infrastructure.

Further, a number of steps have been taken by RBI and NABARD to enhance the credit flow to the agriculture sector. Some of these include, inter-alia, the following:

(i) Banks have been asked to formulate Special Agriculture Credit Plans (SACPs). They have also been asked by RBI to increase disbursements under SACPs to agriculture sector by 25%;

(ii) With a view to strengthen the financial capability of NABARD, its capital has been raised by Rs. 1000 crores during the past two years and is expected to be raised further by Rs. 500 crores during the current year;

(iii) 151 out of 196 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have been given recapitalisation support aggregating Rs. 774 crores (Central Government share). A provision of Rs. 265 crores has been made in the Budget for the current year for carrying forward the process of recapitalisation of RRBs;

(iv) Banks have been advised to set up specialised agricultural branches in each State to exclusively deal with high-tech agricultural advances;

(v) Banks have been advised to extend cash credit facilities for meeting composite credit requirements of farmers having a good track record;

(vi) Most of the recommendations made by the High Level Committee on agriculture credit (R.V. Gupta Committee) appointed by RBI have been accepted by them which include, inter-alia, simplication of procedures regarding loan applications, delegation of powers to branch managers, introduction of composite cash credit limits to farmers, introduction of new loan products with savings component, cash disbursement of loans, discretion to banks on matters relating to margin/security requirements for agricultural loans above Rs. 10,000/- and dispensing with "No Due Certificate" as a compulsory requirements, etc.

It is expected that these recommendations when fully implemented by banks would improve flow of credit to agriculture sector specially small and marginal farmers.

Vacancies in Newly Commissioned Low Power TV/AIR Centres

*486. SHRI KARENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the newly commissioned low power Television relay centres and All India Radio Centres across the country, especially in North-Eastern region, are suffering from actue shortage of staff and nearly five hundreds posts at the level of subordinate engineering services have been lying vacant for over two to three years; and

(b) if so, what action Government propose to take to fill up the vacancies in consultation with "Prasar Bharati Board" in view of generating employment under public sector unit as well as to combat unemployment problem in the country to some extent?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Action for filling up the necessary vacancies has been initiated by Prasar Bharati.

Quick Service for Distribution of Letters and Articles

*487. SHRI RAGHAVJI:
SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Department of Posts are considering some measures to ensure that the dak from Delhi/New Delhi reaches each of the capitals of States/ Union Territories the very next day without any surcharge;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to (c) Keeping in view the geographical location of each of the State Capitals/Union Territories and the Air/Rail connections available between these stations, norms for delivery of letter between these places are within 48—72 hours after the day of posting. These norms have been laid down keeping in view the time required for collection, processing, transmission, sorting and delivery of mail under normal conditions. While delivery of mails from Delhi to some State Capitals/Union Territories depending on the time of posting of mail and the Air connection available could be delivered the very next day, the same may not be feasible in respect of each of the locations because of their locations from Delhi and non-availability of suitable Air/Train connections. The Department has already introduced from 1994 special mail channels, called, Rajdhani Channel for transmission of household mail between Delhi and the State Capitals (other than the metros) and Metro Channel between Delhi and the Metros and between the Metros. Specially desinged letter boxes and mail bags in yellow colour for Rajdhani Channel and blue colour for Metro Channel, have also been introduced. For priority handling of this category of mail in transmission, these bags are closed with specially designed colour lables. Because of geographical locations, it is not feasible to introduce Rajdhani Channel for all the capitals of Union Territories.

Supreme Court's Judgement Regarding Appointment of Officer Nominee Director

*488. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Hon'able Supreme Court of India, in its judgement given in August, 1989 in the case of Transfer of Petitioners No. 376—401 of 1985 in the appointment of officer nominee Director on the board of nationalised banks clearly asked Government either to amend the existing scheme for appointments and until any amendment is made to continue the existing scheme;

(b) if so, the details of the judgement and whether it has since been implemented; and

(c) if not, the reason for not implementing the same?